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RURAL PEOPLE ARE LEARNING TO LIVE WELL
WISE EXPENDITURE OF EFFORT

A radio talk by Mrs. Luther May, farm woman, Danville, Kentucky, delivered in the Home Demonstration Radio Hour, November 6, 1935, and broadcast by a network of 47 associate NBC radio stations.

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The expression, "to live well", means to many people the expenditure of large sums of money. During the past few years we farm folk have had little money to spend. The home demonstration program of our Kentucky College of Agriculture which brings us information when our need for help and experience to understand makes it a very vital thing, came to our rescur with a "live-at-home" program. Many farm people have been able, thru the help of this service, not only to uphold standards of living but to go right on improving them thru a wise expenditure of effort.

What constitutes that "good living"? From the baby crying for his milk to the men in the field needing three meals a day, all homemakers know that the most important part of "living well" is being well fed. The provision and preparation of plenty of good, wholesome food, sufficient in quantity and variety for health, and served so it is appetizing and appealing to the family, is a cooperative undertaking for the whole farm family. By careful planning to a garden, using a canning and storage budget for the winter supply of fruits and vegetables, by raising, butchering, curing and canning the home meat supply, by producing dairy and poultry products, home grown cereals and sweets, the rural family may be well fed the year round at a very small cash outlay. The rural family is fast learning the economy of this procedure which conserves the cash income for the purchase of comforts and conveniences which are difficult or impossible to produce. Last year over 1,100 families in Kentucky reported meeting the requirements of a canning and storage budget for the first time. Seventy of these were in our own county of Boyle.

Living well also means being well clothed. No longer are we able to distinguish between farm and city folks by their dress. The rural woman, thru the home demonstration program, has learned something of textile and other clothing values, she has developed skill in the making and remodeling of garments, blocking and trimming of hats, home care and cleaning of clothing. Thru this information, she has been able to stretch her clothing dollar and to dress her family smartly and well on a much smaller clothing budget than her city sister. One of my neighbors last winter re-blocked her 16-year-old wedding hat and wore it with pride. Homemakers in extension groups made or remodeled over 48,000 garments and hats last year. This work represents \$56,000 worth of wisely expended effort beside giving the members of the farm family a feeling of personal pride.

We farm people in the past have been prone to overlook the importance of beauty in our surroundings. This love of beauty which is inherent in every human being has been fanned into flame by the program of landscape gardening and home improvement brought to us thru the home demonstration service. One has but to drive down our country roads to be impressed with the improvement that has been made in rural homes - plantings of trees, shrubs and flowers, well-cared-for lawns, painted buildings and removal
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of unsightly things. The number of rural homes reporting exterior improvements runs into the thousands and it is safe to say most of these improvements represent expenditure of effort.

Within the home which the home demonstration program has reached, you will find a woman making the most of what she has. We have been taught to refinish, slip cover and upholster furniture, to reseat chairs, to hook, braid, weave and crochet rugs from old materials, to make many small articles of household furnishings. The magic of color has been brought to us and every day we find new ways of applying this information. We are learning to discriminate between what is cheap and faddish and what is permanently beautiful. Our eyes have been opened to the beauty in commonplace things about us. Sweet potato vines, old stone jars, burlap and cotton feed sacks, when properly used, add beauty to our homes. Thirteen hundred and sixty-nine pieces of furniture were reconditioned last year by Kentucky homemakers and over 10,000 major room improvements were made. We are achieving this beauty thru intelligent selection of furnishings to be purchased and thru wise expenditure of our own effort.

We have even been able to add, thru our own efforts, conveniences, simple water systems, built-in storage facilities, all kinds of homemade gadgets and devices to lift drudgery from the shoulders of rural homemakers. More than 2,000 rooms have been rearranged for comfort and convenience.

Thru better methods of work, family cooperation and planning, we are gaining more leisure. The Extension Service which has widened our field of interest and the scope of our activities is helping us to use this leisure in worth while and satisfying ways. We find rural homemakers enjoying good reading, appreciating good music, taking part in community recreation, school and church activities, holding memberships in homemakers' clubs, garden clubs, enjoying out-of-door sports and acting as leaders in all phases of community activities, all of which give us much joy of living.

Gradually modern consolidated schools are dotting our countryside, thru the effort of rural people to secure for their children educational opportunities equal to those enjoyed by other youth. The opportunity for high school education in rural communities is creating a desire for higher education. Farm families are finding ways and means of sending their children to college. One mother said to me, "I expect my daughter to ride thru college on her Jersey cow." By saving all the premiums won on her cow in 4-H shows and by achieving a dairy scholarship thru her efforts, she finished her college education. Other farm children, with the help and encouragement of 4-H club work, have been able to turn their skills and abilities into a college education.

Let me in conclusion repeat that rural people, thru wise expenditure of effort, are securing the necessities, comforts, conveniences and even luxuries which are essential to "living well". In addition, they are gaining those educational, social and spiritual opportunities without which there is no such thing as "living well".

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